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Was the old isolation of Scripture better or worse for its credibility? For better for worse it is now forever past, and must give way to a manifold twining with the web of human memorial. No longer do the royal personages of Holy Writ hold their way as in another world to our imagination. Their names, their cities, friends, enemies, alliances, conquests, captivities, are read in hieroglyphic and in cuneiform. It was, after all, this very world in which they lived and died.

This former isolation of which I have spoken, this seclusion of Scripture history from almost all besides which we were learning under the epithet "profane," was a matter of secret cogitation to many minds. For our own part, every new link of true connection between Biblical and other history does not darken or desecrate the Bible, but lights and hallows that other. It is true enough, indeed, that we could not reasonably wish the inspired writers to have filled their scrolls with things more or less remote from the supreme purpose of God; but when in His benign providence these records fall into our hands, they waken up a thousand dormant questions, quicken a reverent curiosity, substantiate or else at once annihilate our dreamy conjectures, and make us feel as we read again the hallowed stories of Abraham, Joseph, David, or Daniel, how truly the divine purpose ever was, not that His servants should be taken from the world, but kept from the evil, and made "salt of the earth" to those with whom they had to do.

The test of "internal coincidence" has been applied to the Old Testament with admirable sagacity and effect by the late Professor Blunt and others, and we may well be thankful that this line of proof was enforced by the very absence of external testimony. It is the task of this day to recognize this external testimony, never seen by our fathers, but now given into our hands as fresh as it is ancient; much of it in the shape of actual parallel evidence, but far more in the scarcely less valuable form of "historical illustration," the material out of which the enlightened imagination represents the times and men that were of old; for the historian must be a seer before he can be a judge, and this historic divination (so to speak) is one of the highest achievements of literature.—*From the Preface to Tomkins' "Times of Abraham."*

The Egyptian Language.—It is in vain, I believe, that the testimony of philology has been invoked in evidence of the origin of the Egyptians. The language which has been recovered belongs to a very early stage of speech, and is not, or at least cannot be shown to be, allied to any other known language than its descendant the Coptic. It is certainly not akin to any of the known dialects either of North or South Africa, and the attempts which have hitherto been made towards establishing such a kindred must be considered as absolute failures. A certain number of Egyptian words, such as *i*, "go," *ta*, "give, place," have the same meaning as the corresponding Indo-European roots. And a few other Egyptian words sound very like Semitic words of the same meaning. But the total number of words in the Egyptian vocabulary which have the appearance of relationship either with the Aryan or with the Semitic stock turns out, after passing through the necessary process of sifting, to be extremely small. A considerable number of words have certainly passed from one language into another, but all

these have to be deducted. Those who talk of Egyptian having its root in Semitic, or say that its grammar is Semitic, must mean something quite different from what these words imply in the mouth of some one well versed in the science of language. I once heard a learned Jew compare Hebrew with Portuguese. All that he meant to say was, that it preferred the letter *m* where the kindred languages took *n*, as the Portuguese language often does in contrast with its sister languages, the Spanish, French and Italian. And those who speak of Egyptian grammar as being Semitic are clearly thinking of some peculiarities of it, in forgetfulness of very much more important ones. It would be quite easy, under such conditions, to discover Finnish or Polynesian affinities.

The Egyptian and the Semitic languages belong to quite different stages of language, the former to what Professor Max Müller calls the second or Terminational, the latter to the third or Inflectional stage. In the Terminational stage, two or more roots may coalesce to form a word, the one retaining its radical independence, the other sinking down to a mere termination. The languages belonging to this stage have generally been called agglutinative. Now the Egyptian language has indeed reached this stage as regards the pronominal and one or two other suffixes. But in all other respects it most nearly resembles the languages of the first or Radical stage, in which there is no formal distinction between a root and a word. The agglutination between an Egyptian word and its pronominal suffix is of the lightest possible kind; a particle may, and often does, intervene between them. A recent critic reviewing Rossi's Grammar a few weeks ago, preferred that of Brugsch to it in consequence of the paradigms of verbs which are to be found in the latter. He might with equal wisdom have found fault with both for omitting the declensions. My own criticism would have been very different. There is, I believe, too much paradigm in Rossi's Grammar. There are no paradigms at all in Egyptian; and those who have inserted such things into their grammars (I say it with the utmost deference to such admirable scholars as E. de Rougé and Brugsch) have been led astray by their efforts to find in Egyptian what exists in other languages. But each kind of language has its own processes. Hebrew and Arabic verbs can as little be thrown into moods and tenses corresponding to the Greek or Latin verbs, as you can find Pual or Hithpahal forms in French or English. Personal endings are indispensable to the Indo-European and to the Semitic verbs. The Egyptian verb is unchangeable, and has no personal ending properly speaking. The suffix which is sometimes added to it is not really a personal ending. It is put instead of a subject; and when the subject is expressed, the pronominal suffix is and must be omitted. It would be impossible in Hebrew, or in any other Semitic language, to suppress the personal ending, which is an essential part of the word in which it occurs.

One of the chief differences between the Egyptian language on the one hand and the Indo-European and Semitic on the other, is, that the distinctions between roots, stems and words, can hardly be said to exist at all in the former. The bare root, which in the languages of the third stage lies, as it were, below the surface, and is only revealed by its developments to scientific inquiry, is almost invariably identical in Egyptian with the word in actual use. From one Aryan or Semitic root, which is itself no part of speech and has but an abstract existence, verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs and other parts of speech, are derived. The actual Egyptian word, taken by itself, is in very many instances no part of speech,

but within the limits of the notion which it represents is potentially noun, verb, adjective, adverb, &c. The notion expressed by an Egyptian word is only determined, as that of a verb in the strict sense (*verbum finitum*), by the presence of a subject. When no subject (that is, noun or pronoun) is expressed, we may indeed have a "*verbum infinitum*," but this is grammatically a noun or an adjective. How can a language of this description be called Semitic in its grammar?

There are three different ways in which a verb may be connected with its subject, but these are wholly irrespective of time or mood, so that grammarians who have introduced these forms into their paradigms call them "Present-Past-Future," first, second or third. They might add, "Indicative-Potential-Conjunctive," and so forth. The Egyptian verb is often accompanied by an auxiliary, and is grammatically subordinate to it; and the combinations formed by these auxiliary words with the verbal notion enable the language to express meanings equivalent to those expressed by our Indo-European tenses and moods. But this is very different from what is meant by paradigm.

I have just spoken of the grammatical subordination of a verb to its auxiliary. This is almost the only kind of grammatical subordination which exists in the language, and the consequence of it is fatal to anything like beauty of construction in the form of the sentence. It seems unfair to judge of the capabilities of a language of which almost the entire literature has perished. How could we judge of the capabilities of the Greek language had all its poetry and oratory been lost, and nothing remained but its inscriptions? Yet enough remains to show what the structure of the Egyptian sentences must necessarily have been; we possess several narratives of considerable length and of different dates, a great many hymns, and the heroic poem of Pentaur, which was considered sufficiently important to be engraved on the walls of at least four temples—Abydos, Luqsor, Karnak and Ipsambul—at one of the periods of the greatest glory of Egypt. It is evident that prose sentences like those of Plato, Demosthenes, Cicero or Burke, or poetical ones like those of Sophocles, Euripides or Horace (not to mention any other names), are as impossible in Egyptian as they are in Hebrew or Arabic. Whatever beauty there is in Egyptian composition (and there often is considerable beauty) is derived either from the thought itself or from the simplicity of the expression, not from the artistic variety or structure of its periods. M. Renan has made very similar remarks upon the structure of the Semitic sentence (which, however, admits of much greater variety than the Egyptian, and does not suffer in narratives from the perpetual repetition of the same auxiliary verb), and he has inferred from it the inferiority of the Semitic mind to the European with reference to certain branches of intellectual development. I have little doubt that M. Renan is right to this extent, that certain languages as vehicles of thought are inferior to others, and that as long as men are confined to the inferior vehicle of thought, they are unable to raise themselves to the level of others who enjoy a more efficient instrument. It is difficult to conceive the Egyptians as otherwise than incapacitated by their language from profound philosophy. It is hardly possible to read a page written in an Indo-European language, from Sanskrit to Keltic, without coming across some kind of dialectic process of which I do not remember a single trace in an Egyptian text.—*From Renouf's Religion of Ancient Egypt.*